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STOERCK, A. von



*Colchicum Autumnale*  
Eng: Meadow Saffron

Augustin Lippus Medic. Stud. delin  
Vienna 1763.

A  
NARRATIVE  
OF THE  
SURPRIZING EFFECTS  
OF THE  
MEADOW SAFFRON  
IN THE  
CURE OF THE DROPSY.

TRANSLATED FROM  
THE LATIN OF DR. ANTHONY STORK,

ONE OF  
The Principal Physicians to the Empress-Queen,  
and Physician to the Hospital of Vienna,  
BY A PHYSICIAN.

To which are added,  
Observations, and an Account of the Hydrocephalus,  
BY THE TRANSLATOR.

*Ratiocinium plurimum laudo, quod ex effectibus initium sumit, et consequentias  
ex phaenomenis prosequitur.*

Hippocrat. Præcept.

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P R E F A C E,

BY THE

T R A N S L A T O R.

**N**OTHING has retarded improvement in medicine more, than the philosophical jargon so indiscriminately made use of in reasoning about occult causes, and in drawing vague and general conclusions,

clusions, from a few facts of very doubtful authority.

Dr. *Stork*, who has enriched physic with so many important discoveries, is well aware how necessary experience and observation are, to promote any solid improvements in medicine, and has therefore followed the footsteps of *Hippocrates* and *Sydenham*, by first attending to the nature of diseases and effects of medicines, and only afterwards with great caution, drawing such corollaries as the facts evidently lead to \*. *Repertis deinde medicinæ remediis, homines de rationibus eorum differere cœpisse, nec post rationem medicinam esse inventam sed post inventam medicinam rationem esse quæsitam.*

*Vienna* has now become a fashionable school for physic, which is owing en-

\* *Cels.* pref. lib. i.

tirely

tirely to the manner Dr. *Stork*, and other physicians of the hospital, conduct their practice, and the great attention they pay to the effects of such medicines as their own country affords.

The importance and value of the discovery of a medicine, a native of our own country, and which cures the most obstinate and hazardous disease we are acquainted with, and that too in its last stage, when other remedies have failed, is a sufficient apology for my rendering that of more general use, by translating this treatise into a language that may be understood by all our countrymen, both medical and others.

The narration of cures contained in this treatise, are sufficient of themselves to satisfy the most prejudiced reader, that this medicine has many advantages,



and is possessed of more real efficacy than any as yet known.

Upon a review of the different cures, it appears, that, notwithstanding it was always prescribed in the most desperate cases, after other very probable and generally efficacious remedies were tried to no purpose, it never failed of bringing about a cure, and that by the most gentle, and, by all allowed, the most eligible operation of any; I mean an increase of urine.

The ancients considered the essence of this disease, to consist in a paucity of urine; and *Aretæus* observes, the most effectual way of curing it, is by encreasing this evacuation\*. *Sydenham* †, who

\* *Si plus humoris excernitur quam assumitur, ita demum secundæ valitudinis spes est.* Cels. lib. iii. cap. 21.

\* *Oper. omnia. tract. de hydrope.* p. 465. edit. Lond.



prescribed violent purgatives and emetics with more freedom than any body else, says, that, in persons much weakened by the disease, the evacuation by urine is preferable to any other.

It is allowed by all physicians, that the urinary discharge is preferable to any other, and that it may be promoted without debilitating or raising such violent commotions in the body, as that by stool or vomit.

The dropsy is a disease that generally attacks people of weak and lax fibres, and whose body has been weakened by preceeding diseases: the effect of such a laxity is a deposition of a watery fluid into the cellular membrane, and all the other cavities of the body. Topical complaints, such as scirrhosity of the liver and other viscera, may give rise to it; but the cause is generally very universal,

versal, and requires both the assistance of diuretic and tonic medicines to remove it effectually.

When this serum or watery fluid is deposited, so as to stagnate in these cavities, it is very apt to become putrid; and, therefore, such medicines as resist putrefaction must be made use of.

Great thirst and costiveness are likewise common complaints in this disease. The first, which is owing to the want of fluid in the mass of blood, must be obviated, not by large quantities of watery fluid, which is known to increase the disease\*, but by some medicine that operates specifically, and in small quantity.

Costiveness must be prevented by gentle laxatives, not by violent purga-

\* *Quo plus sunt potæ, plus sitiuntur, aquæ.*

tives,

tives, which increase the weakness already so great by the disease.

That the *oxymel colchici* is a powerful diuretic we have no reason to doubt; for in every cure it performed it directed its operation by urine; and by giving vigour and appetite to the patient, it seems to enjoy a tonic and restorative virtue, so much wanted in this disease.

It has an advantage over alkaline salts as a diuretic, that it is taken with a less quantity of fluid, and instead of increasing thirst, as they do, it never fails of removing it; and from experience it appears, that it obviates costiveness very gently.

Squills have been justly recommended as powerful diuretics; but it is very difficult to manage their operation properly.



perly, and prevent their either vomiting or purging the patient.

\* Dr. *Ruffel* observes, that they are diuretic only when they produce a sickness at the stomach, without either vomiting or purging the patient. Besides, it appears from cases 2d, 4th, and 9th, that the *oxymel* affected a cure after the squills had failed to give relief.

The *oxymel* must likewise resist putrefaction very powerfully, not only from the nature of the root itself, but also from the other ingredients that enter into its composition.

The operation for the *paracentesis* in the ascites, or dropfy of the belly, can never do more than palliate the disease, without removing the cause; and both

\* *Ruffel de Tabæ Glandæ.* p. 68.

\* *Petit* and † *La Motte* condemn it, when water is collected either in the head or breast. ‡ *Sydenham* considers the external application of blisters as hazardous; and although punctures are frequently made in the lower extremities to relieve urgent symptoms, yet their cure is often difficult, and the danger of a || gangrene supervening is very considerable.

We must therefore have recourse to internal remedies, and the same method of cure is applicable in whatever cavity the water is collected; for before it can be evacuated, either from the belly or other parts, it must first be absorbed into the mass of blood, and discharged

\* *Acad. de Sciences l'an 1718. p. 122.*

† *Traité compl. de chirurg. Tom. ii. p. 189.*

‡ *Traçtat de hydrop. p. 470. edit. Lond.*

|| *Vide Loc. supra citat.*

by some *excretory* vessel; that the kidneys afford the most convenient outlet, we have already shewn.

From the difficulty of breathing, the cough without expectoration, and the anasarcaous swellings, in some of Dr. *Stork's* patients, it would appear that water was collected in the breast, and notwithstanding its being generally reckoned an incurable disease, has given way to this medicine; nor is it improbable that it would frequently afford relief in phthysical cases.

It ought therefore to be used in every species of dropsy; and as the white swelling of the knee is owing to a collection of lymphatic fluid in that joint, it may be very properly employ'd in such a case.

I have



I have subjoined to this treatise, an account of a disease that has been very seldom taken notice of by medical authors, although very frequent and generally fatal in this country, I mean the *hydrocephalus*; I have been furnished with observations from a late very eminent physician for this purpose, and my own practice has also given me an opportunity of seeing the disease.

If the *colchicum* shall be found to have equal effects in this species of dropsy, as in any other, I will venture to say that a knowledge of it is as considerable an acquisition to physic, as that of the bark, mercury, or such other efficacious medicines.

As I find that some mistakes have been made in this country, in using a similar plant for the *colchicum* itself; and

as I am now employed in making a variety of experiments upon this subject, which will soon be laid before the public, I have procured a quantity of the individual species, (*Dr. Stork* uses) from its native soil, and in its proper season, with considerable trouble, and at no small expence.

From no mercenary views, but for the benefit of apothecaries, and such others as may choose to use it, I have prepared a considerable quantity of the medicine itself, agreeable to *Dr. Stork's* direction; and appointed it to be sold, along with this treatise, at *Mr. Payne's*, at the *Feathers* in *Pater-noster-Row*, and *Mr. Durban's*, Stationer, at *Charing-Cross*, in Bottles at Two Shillings and Six-pence each.

A  
NARRATIVE  
OF  
THE CURES

PERFORMED BY

The Root of the Meadow-Saffron,  
IN DROPSIES, &c.

CASE I.

A Man, aged twenty-seven, laboured under an intermittent fever for several months ; a variety of medicines were prescribed for him by physicians, as well as by surgeons, and the fever in consequence of these seemed to abate for a few days, but always returned again with greater violence.

B

Being



Being now so tired with the great variety of medicines that were employed to so little purpose, he at last had recourse to a powder which was offered him by an old woman, the composition of which he was altogether unacquainted with.

The fever by these means was entirely stopped, but his strength was daily impaired; his appetite gone; his complexion pale and ghastly; his *hypochondria* became tense; his urine flowed in small quantity, and felt hot; he had frequent mucous stools, with considerable *tenesmus*.

In about four weeks his belly began to swell, his legs and arms became *œdematous*, and yielded much to the impression of the finger.

In this miserable situation he asked my advice.

On the first day I ordered him to take one dram of rhubarb, which purged him eight times; the tension of his belly was somewhat diminished, and next day his digestion was much better;

I then

I then gave him the following conserve.

℞. Pulv. Rad. enul. Campan. dr. fs.  
terr. Foliat. tartar dr. i. fs. Con-  
serv. Nasturt. Aq. Unc. ij. fs.  
Oxymel, Scillitic Unc. j. Spirit  
Nitr. dulc. gtt. LX.

S. A tea-spoonful to be taken every three hours.

In the space of three days the tension of his belly was entirely gone, his appetite became gradually better, and he slept more calmly in the night-time.

During the use of this medicine he became costive, his urine continued to flow but in small quantity, and he had some symptoms of strangury: upon the sixth day I repeated his former dose of rhubarb, which relieved him greatly; his appetite mended, and his strength daily increased.

I continued the use of his conserve for eight days longer, the colour of his face became more natural, his belly  
B 2 much

much softer, his appetite very good ; but his urine was still in very small quantity, his belly bound, and his extremities as *œdematous* as formerly.

I therefore thought of trying the *oxymel of colchicum*, after repeating another dose of the rhubarb, which, by giving him six stools, afforded considerable relief.

I ordered him to take one tea-spoonful of the oxymel, morning and evening, in a cup of the infusion of elder flowers.

On the first day he was much distressed with *tenesmus*, and frequent inclination to go to stool ; his urine was still in small quantity, and high coloured, occasioning pains in the *urethra* as it passed along.

On the second day his urine was discharged in greater quantity, and of a darkish colour ; the pains ceased, and he had two stools which were both bilious and fœtid, and contained a quantity of glutinous matter.



On the third day I gave him three tea-spoonfuls of the oxymel in the same infusion; he passed three pints of urine of different colours; he frequently felt a desire to go to stool, attended however with *tenesmus*.

On the fourth day I continued the same dose; his urine continued to flow very copiously, his appetite good, his strength much greater, and his limbs admitted of a much freer motion.

On the fifth day I repeated a tea-spoonful of the oxymel four times.

He discharged two bilious stools, and passed by urine a large quantity of a pale inodorous fluid. The swellings of his arms and legs greatly diminished, he felt himself in perfect health, had no thirst, and his appetite was extremely good.

In the space of nine days the swelling of his legs and arms entirely disappeared, and his belly was reduced to its natural size; but, having no stool for three days, I repeated his former dose of rhubarb.

I now

I now ordered him to rub his whole body with dry linnen cloaths, impregnated with the fumes of amber, twice a day; and, by this means, he was perfectly cured.

He recovered entirely his strength and appetite, he slept well in the nighttime, nor was any remains of his fever to be observed.

C A S E

## C A S E II.

A Woman, sixty-two years of age, having been afflicted for four months with a most inveterate dropfy of the belly and other parts, was admitted into our hospital on the twenty-fourth of October 1762, that she might there finish the small remainder of her life.

Her breathing was much oppressed, her pulse unequal, and even intermitting; her cough violent, and almost continued; and she heard the noise of matter moving in her lungs; she could not possibly lie in bed, but was obliged to sit in an erect posture.

She received no benefit from the best expectorating and diuretic medicines; nor did laxatives afford her any relief.

Squills, both in the form of oxymel and given along with wine, were at last for many days tried to no purpose.

Dr. Collin and I, therefore, agreed to try the *oxymel colchici*.

We



We immediately ordered a tea-spoonful to be taken four times on the first day, in some pectoral infusion.

On the same day her spitting increased, was somewhat tenacious, and of a greenish colour: she discharged urine in great quantity, and without any heat or pain.

On the day following she felt herself much better, her expectoration continued easier, her urine flowed in considerable quantity, and she had two natural stools.

On the third day the same appearances were observed.

On the fourth day we gave her two tea-spoonfuls four times, and this dose was sufficient to remove the disease.

Such a quantity of water was discharged by the urinary passages, that, on the twelfth day, the swelling of her belly, and of the other parts, was entirely gone.

Her breathing became much easier, her pulse almost natural, she could lie  
in

in any situation, and rested well in the night-time.

We continued the use of the oxymel, but in smaller doses, only giving her one tea-spoonful four times a day.

Her cough became daily less troublesome, her spitting was much diminished, her strength increased, and her appetite was considerable.

After the third week she got out of bed, walked about, and in a few days after she was perfectly cured.

Dr. Collin and I were extremely well pleased with this cure, and entirely satisfied with regard to the effects of the colchicum: the other physicians, who attended the hospital, were astonished with a recovery so unexpected; but what pleases us most of all, is, that the illustrious *Van Sweton* was present during the cure: he saw the patient while in the worst stage of the disease, and afterwards when she was entirely cured.

We kept her in the hospital for three months, though quite well, that we might perceive if any bad effects arose from the use of the colchicum, after the cure of the dropfy was completed.

However, she remained perfectly well, was able to perform her ordinary labour, eat and slept well, her stools easy, and her urine natural. She was now dismissed cured.

C A S E



## C A S E III.

A Man, in his fifty-sixth year, came to our hospital, labouring under a drop-sy of many months standing.

Every medicine was employed that the art suggested in similar cases, but none afforded any relief; his belly continued to encrease in size, his thighs and legs were much swelled, and his appetite entirely destroyed.

These symptoms obliged us to have recourse to the *oxymel colchici*.

A tea-spoonful was given four times a day, in a cup of the infusion of ground-ivy; and this dose was continued for four days.

During this time, we observed his urine encreased in larger quantity than usual.

On the fifth day he took two tea-spoonfuls, four times a day.

He then passed more than twelve pounds of urine in a day, it was of different colours, it had for the most

part a mucous *flocculent* sediment, and a small quantity of an oily pellicle of variegated colours appeared upon the surface.

In the space of six days his belly was much softer, and greatly diminished in size. His thighs and legs were also observed to be less tense.

His urine continued to run off in very large quantities, and his medicine operated so well, that in the space of five weeks, every remains of swelling was gone, his appetite returned, he slept well, and had a natural stool once a day.

C A S E

## C A S E IV.

A Man, aged fifty, much addicted to drinking, and whose strength and looks were much impaired for many months, at last was attacked with a swelling of his belly. Diuretic and purgative medicines of different kinds were employed, without any advantage: his strength seemed greatly diminished under their use, and the size of his belly much encreased.

Wine of squills, which has generally considerable efficacy, was used in this case to no purpose.

We had then recourse to the *oxymel colchici*; and a tea-spoonful was at first given, four times a day.

This dose hardly produced any effect; and, on the third day, we prescribed two tea-spoonfuls, to be taken four times a day; by which such a quantity of urine was discharged, that, in the space of eleven days, all the water was evacuated, and no vestige of dropsy remained.

C A S E



## C A S E V.

A Woman, thirty years of age, was afflicted with an ague for nine months, whose fits returned every other day; which, however, being at last cured, was succeeded by a dropsy.

A great many physicians were consulted, and, notwithstanding many medicines were employed, the disease became daily worse, and she was so weak as not to be able to stir out of bed.

She was therefore carried to our hospital.

She complained of a violent thirst; her pulse was very quick, and somewhat hard; her belly tense, and so much enlarged as to render her breathing frequent and difficult.

On account of the hardness, quickness of the pulse, and a great thirst, antiphlogistic and diluting medicines were indicated.

On the first day I therefore prescribed the cooling, nitrous emulsion.

On

On the second day a tea-spoonful of the oxymel was given, four times, along with the emulsion.

In four days the fever disappeared, the thirst was entirely gone, and her belly began to feel soft; nor was it longer necessary to continue the emulsion.

A double dose of the *oxymel colchici* was therefore given.

A large quantity of urine was discharged, and in a few days the swelling of the belly subsided entirely; she breathed easily, her cough abated, her sleeps were calm, long, and refreshing.

In two weeks she recovered her strength, and was dismissed from the hospital perfectly cured.

## C A S E VI.

A Woman, aged thirty-seven, after having laboured under a jaundice and dropfy for many months, and for which ſhe took a variety of medicines, came to our hoſpital.

Her *abdomen* was very tenſe; on the left *hypocondrium* a broad, hard, movable tumour was felt; the region of the liver gave pain to the touch, and her whole body was of a blackiſh yellow colour.

Her appetite was bad, ſhe had no thirſt, and was very coſtive; her urine was of a blackiſh colour, of a thick conſiſtence, and in very ſmall quantity.

We endeavoured to reſolve the obſtructions, to remove coſtivenefs, and open the urinary paſſages, by a ſtrong decoction of graſs; adding to it, regenerated tartar and honey of mercury.

During the uſe of the decoction, ſhe felt great anxiety about the *precordia*, and a large quantity of a blackiſh coloured



loured blood was discharged by vomit and stool: this brought on a weakness, and she complained of great pains in her belly.

Demulcent and peregoric medicines were therefore substituted, in place of this decoction.

On the day following she discharged by stool a large quantity of blood, similar to the former; but vomited none. The pains of her belly still remained, and the anxiety at her breast was much diminished. We thought it proper to persevere still in the use of *demulcents*, *vulnerants*, and mild *peregorics*. The burning heat and pain in her belly were by these means somewhat quieted; there was no farther discharge of blood; but the belly became so much swelled, and breathing so difficult, that a fear of suffocation was frequently brought on.

An evident fluctuation of water was now perceived, and its evacuation became highly necessary.

The strong, acrid, and stimulating diuretics could not be safely given to a

D

person

person whose habit of body was bad, nor could the more violent purgatives be given, for fear of exciting the flux of blood, which might kill the patient.

No medicine therefore promised to succeed so well as the *oxymel colchici*, of whose good effects we had seen so many proofs, and that without raising violent commotions of any kind in the body.

A tea-spoonful of the *oxymel* was taken four times on the first day, drinking after it four ounces of emulsion, sweetened with syrup of poppies.

This emulsion was given with a view to take off any irritation that might follow the use of the *oxymel*.

The *oxymel*, in this case, produced wonders; the urine, without any pain, flowed in prodigious quantities; was of a darkish colour, thick, and deposited a black tenacious sediment.

Nor was it necessary to encrease the dose of the *oxymel*; for by this quantity the desired effects were produced, and in the space of four weeks the dropsy  
and

and jaundice disappeared, and she perfectly recovered her health.

A few days after she began the use of the *oxymel*, all the pains of her belly ceased, her stools were natural, she complained of no thirst, a large quantity of urine was daily discharged, her appetite was in a short time restored, and her strength returned.

These circumstances immediately afforded hopes of her recovery.

Dr. *Collin* and I were well pleased with this cure ; for a great deal of time had been bestowed, and a great variety of medicines were prescribed by some eminent professors, without affording her any relief ; and she was sent to our hospital as incurable.



## C A S E VII.

A Girl, aged twenty, was for many months in our hospital for the following complaints.

Her belly was very large and hard, her thighs and legs were also much swelled, and as hard as a piece of wood; she could neither sit nor stand, and had no power of moving her body.

After a great many medicines were tried without affording any relief, the *oxymel colchici* was given.

After using it for a short time her urine began to flow in large quantities, and in the space of two weeks her belly was of the natural size and softness, the swelling of her thighs and legs subsided; she got out of bed, could move her body, and walk about: there only remained a pungent pain in the joints of her toes, which however was greatly abated.

There

There never was any fluctuation to be perceived, nor was the tumour of her thighs and legs *œdematous*; they were very rigid, and of great hardness.

C A S E

## C A S E VIII.

A Man, of sixty years of age and upwards, laboured under an old cough and difficult breathing; he had also a very severe strangury. I prescribed the *oxymel colchici* for him; his cough became looser, a purulent and copious spitting followed, and his breathing was much easier.

However his strangury was not cured, although he took the *oxymel colchici* for six weeks; it was venereal, and brought on by the imprudent use of injections of lead, which put a stop to a gonorrhœa.

C A S E



## C A S E IX.

A Woman, aged thirty-six, three months ago was seized with a violent cough, and her breathing became very difficult. Many medicines were tried, which were insufficient to put a stop to the disease.

She was restless in the night-time; she could lye in no position; when asleep she suddenly awaked, almost suffocated for want of air.

Her feet, legs, and thighs began now to swell; her belly was very tense, and in a few days her whole body became so *œdematous* that she could not possibly move herself.

Her eyes seemed buried in water, nor could she speak easily.

In the mean time her cough continued to be very troublesome; her breathing to be more difficult, and she had a suppression of urine.

Diuretics

Diuretics prepared from squills and other vegetables, as well as minerals, excited a desire to make urine; but a few drops, attended with considerable heat and pain, were only discharged.

Purgatives brought away a large quantity of water; however, the swelling was not diminished, the oppression at her breast became greater, and her strength was greatly impaired. At last I thought it necessary that she should take, three or four times a day, a tea-spoonful of the *oxymel colchici*.

On the first day there was a more free discharge of urine.

On the second day a purulent and foetid spitting came on, she breathed easier, began to move her limbs, and her urine flowed easily, without heat or pain.

On the third day she took a tea-spoonful of the *oxymel* four times; by this dose, the discharge by expectoration and urine was so promoted, that in the space of fifteen days the swelling

had entirely subsided, and she breathed with great freedom.

Her appetite now returned, she had hardly any cough, walked out of bed, slept well in the night-time, could lye on either side, and she daily recovered her strength.

The efficacy of this medicine, in this case, was surprizing; the dose being so small, while the effects were so considerable.

E

C A S E



## C A S E X.

A Woman, ninety years of age, was brought to our hospital on the twenty-fourth day of *April*.

She was deprived of all her senses, was both deaf and dumb, and had all the appearance of a person in an apoplexy. Her breathing was attended with snoring, and high; her pulse was unequal, very weak, and intermitted; while she coughed, there was heard a noise of matter moving in her breast, and her whole body was swelled to an immense size; her *abdomen*, which was full of water, protruded very much, and was considerably tense.

For many days remedies were employed, which moved her urine, and recovered her strength; stools were obtained by glysters.

However the disease continued as formerly; hence we were led to employ the *oxymel*.

On the first day, an ounce divided into four doses was given.

She bore this quantity extremely well, and the effects of the medicine were immediately perceived.

Her urine was discharged in considerable quantity, and next day she became more sensible.

In a few days she was able to answer questions that were put to her, and could breathe more freely.

She could move her limbs somewhat, the swelling of her belly became softer, and her pulse equal.

From these effects the dose seemed very proper, nor was it thought necessary to increase it; for her urine continued to flow in considerable quantity.

She became daily better, and in the space of three weeks was perfectly cured.

The swelling disappeared, and her belly returned to its natural size; she regained her strength, her breathing was easy, she slept well, and had an appetite for food.

The illustrious *Van Sweton* saw this cure performed.

A surprizing proof of the efficacy of a medicine in so miserable an old woman !

Her urine was of different colours, and deposited at the bottom of the vessel a quantity of a glutenous thick sediment\* ; she had no spitting, although her breast seemed full of matter in the beginning of the disease.

*Quer.* Was this matter properly concocted and discharged by the urinary passages ?

\* This is a circumstance that deserves attention ; and, in my opinion, suggests the use of this medicine in phthysical or consumptive cases, where a quantity of pus is present in the lungs, in consequence of ulceration. The absorption of this matter generally occasions hectic fever ; but if, by this medicine, it could be expelled by urine, the fever might be prevented altogether, and the complaints in the breast removed, as is strongly evinced in this case.

Was



\* Was there a quantity of serum diffused below the skull? Or were the membranes of the skull inflamed by a serous tumour below, and which might be the cause of that degree of stupor and appoplexy, which was observed in this woman upon her coming into the hospital?

A great many more dropfical patients remain in the hospital; all of them have experienced the good effects of the *oxymel*, and there are very few that will not be cured by it.

A great deal of praise is due to the assiduity of the most learned Dr. *Collin*, that our experiments are executed with so great success.

\* Although the *hydrocephalus* is a disease that for the most part attacks children, yet there are instances on record, where considerable *hydatids* have been found in the substance of the brain: *Lancis. de subit. mort. lib. i. cap. 2.*

From the stupor attending this patient, and the inequality in her pulse, it seems highly probable that water was here collected in the brain, and, by the efficacy of this medicine, absorbed and discharged by urine.

From

From the above cases the following corrolaries may be drawn.

1. That the *oxymel colchici* is a medicine of the greatest safety.

2. That it has frequently the greatest efficacy in the most desperate cases, where other medicines have been used in vain.

3. That a very large dose of this medicine is not necessary to cure the most inveterate disease; that a small dose is generally sufficient.

4. That this medicine promotes expectoration, moderates the cough, and renders breathing free and easy.

5. It is considerably diuretic, nor does it excite any tumults in the body, and never produces any \* *tenesmus*.

6. It is proper in every case where too great a quantity of serum or watery fluid should be discharged by urine.

\* It has so far the advantage of many other diuretics, such as cantharides, &c. which never fail of bringing on strangury and a *tenesmus urinæ*.

7. It must therefore be the most proper medicine of any for the dropfy.

\* I will not pretend to say, that this medicine is infallible ; I only conclude, that it frequently cures those diseases, where other medicines of general use have failed.

I have never seen, in any one case, bad effects arise from this medicine ; and I have, and shall always continue to employ a great deal of attention in observing the effects of medicines.

If I should ever have the smallest reason either to suspect or condemn its use, I should be the first person to declare it to the public, and would take up arms in such a cause against myself. Can any one desire more ?

\* Dr. *Stork's* candour cannot fail of obtaining the approbation of every one : it is sufficiently obvious, in all his other works, where he never suppresses any circumstance that should render his favourite medicine of doubtful use ; and I am persuaded, if he had used the oxymel in the most recent cases of dropfy, he would have been very seldom disappointed.



\* In the beginning, a tea-spoonful was given, twice a day, to an adult, diluted in a cup of such decoction or infusion as was most agreeable either to the patient or physician.

On the second or third day, a tea-spoonful was taken twice, and at last four times. While the patient bore this dose easily, and the desired effects did not follow, then it was gradually increased, until an ounce or an ounce and a half was taken in the day.

If an ounce or an ounce and a half produced no effects, then little was to be expected from this medicine.

\* Dr. *Stork*, with great propriety, proceeded at first cautiously in the use of a new medicine; but since we are now acquainted with its management, I think we ought to begin by taking, at least, one tea-spoonful four times a day; nor are we to despair of its efficacy, if a much larger dose than he mentions be necessary.

I have seen two ounces taken in a day, with considerable effects, after smaller doses, had proved insufficient.

After

After the patient has taken the *oxymel* for some time diluted, then it may be given by itself without any vehicle.

We proceeded with great safety by beginning with a small quantity, and when the case required it, we could increase it at pleasure.

If any symptoms of the disease indicate other remedies along with the *oxymel*, they ought not to be neglected. I have never observed any thing that either weakened or disturbed the effects of the *oxymel*; nor is opium hurtful; its use is even frequently necessary, when the patient is restless in the night-time, or affected with *spasms*, and other similar complaints.





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OF THE

HYDROCEPHALUS.

WHEN this disease did not show itself, by enlarging the cavity of the *cranium*, and separating the bones, it was altogether unknown to the ancients.

*Petit* is the first person who has described it properly, and endeavoured to ascertain the presence of the disease, by a variety of symptoms that are constantly concomitant.

Dr. *Whyte*, late professor of physic at *Edinburgh*, has seen a greater variety of cases in this disease than any other; and his great discernment, as well as accuracy in observation, enabled him to mark such symptoms as are pathognomonic of the disease.

I have myself seen several cases in private practice, and by this means can with some propriety endeavour to describe it.

This disease may be divided into three stages.

In the first, the pulse is from 100 to 140, regular and not intermitting; nor does its strength indicate bleeding.

The tongue is white, *apthæ* are frequently present, and there are commonly flushings of the face.

The patient complains of severe head-ach, especially above the eye-brows; loss of appetite, together with an aversion to light; he vomits once a day, or once in two days, not much at a time or with much pressing; he is frequently costive  
with

with gripes, nor easily moved by purgatives; he has likewise a kind of squinting, rubs his eyes, and, as if afflicted with worms, grinds his teeth, and scratches his nose\*.

In the second stage, the pulse, from being very quick, becomes as slow or slower than natural; it is also irregular †. The skin is at the same time very hot; most of the former symptoms continue; they moan much, and cannot tell of what they complain; sleep little, and are much frightened; sometimes they see objects double, and pass a worm or two, or what is like the fragments of worms, but with no relief; they breathe heavily, their breath

\* *Petit* says, that this disease frequently follows teething in children; that they are in the beginning of the disease often seized with convulsions; and that they are generally either too costive or too loose in their belly. *Acad. des Sciences l'an 1718.* mem. p. 121.

† These symptoms generally happen about fourteen or twenty days before death.



is ill smelted, and what they themselves call sickish ; urine is various in all stages of the disease ; they frequently grow delirious, and sometimes cry out in a wild manner.

The third stage commences when the pulse, from being slow or slower than natural, becomes of a feverish quickness \* ; sometimes it rises slowly and gradually, sometimes very quickly †.

The patient turns heavy and comatose, and frequently lifts his hand to his head || : one eyelid becomes frequently paralytic ‡ and falls down, and in a day or two the other likewise. The pupil is much dilated, and loses its contrac-

\* This happens eight or ten days before death.

† Dr. *Whyte* has observed the pulse 240 immediately before death.

|| *Petit* observes, that they cannot support their heads in an erect position ; that their memory fails them, and from the beginning of the disease are dull and stupid.

‡ This happens two, three, four, or six days before death.

tile power. They are often afflicted with convulsions of the arms, legs, and face, and *subfultus tendinum*. One cheek turns red and hot, while the other is cold and white; the lips are like those of one lately dead, and a looseness now comes on.

The eyes, immediately before death, are frequently inflamed, and the patient swallows with difficulty, or is unable altogether.

Respiration becomes difficult and laborious, and, between expiration and inspiration, a pause, called by the ancients *respiratio rara*, frequently happens, and is succeeded by the death of the patient.

Upon opening the head a pellucid watery fluid, to the quantity from two to eight ounces, is found generally below the *corpus callosum*, in the ventricles of the brain, and no where else.

This disease seldom attacks children before their first year.

During



During the first stage, it is very difficult to distinguish this disease: but when we meet with a patient under sixteen years of age, the most distinguishing symptoms are the following.

The fever of no certain type, irregular in all its accessions or remissions, with vomiting once or twice a day, or once in two days, an aversion to light and pain above the eyelids, or on the crown of the head: when these symptoms continue longer than those of fevers, and do not yield to repeated vomits, gentle purgatives, or blisters, then there is reason to suspect that there is water in the ventricles of the brain. But as worms and other disorders of the stomach are sometimes attended with most of these symptoms, we are often at a loss to find out the dropsy of the other cavities of the brain, till the disease arrives at its second stage, when the pulse begins to turn slow and irregular; for neither in worms, slow fevers,



vers, or diseases of children, arising from obstructed glands in the mesentery, the pulse is slower than natural; besides, in internal dropfies of the brain, the skin is hot, which is seldom the case in other complaints, attended with no fever. The disease is still more evident, when the *strabismus, delirium, coma*, together with a dilatation and loss of motion in the pupil, are present; when the pulse becomes also very quick, from being slower than natural. Flushings of the cheeks, and convulsions frequently supervene.

The method of cure hitherto employed by Dr. *Whyte* and others, is the giving of evacuants, such as purgatives of jalap, rhubarb, calomel, various diuretics, blisters, aromatic steams, dry diet, strong chalybeat waters, and stercoratories. This disease has always hitherto proved fatal; perhaps from the difficulty of attacking it in its first stage; however, as the symptoms are now well

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ascertained, I would suggest the use of the *oxymel colchici* from the very beginning of the disease, at the same time, not neglecting other remedies that may be thought proper.

F I N I S.